

SNIPER SHOOTS YOUTH TRIMMING TREE; POLICE MANHUNT SPREADS

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7 Charter Amendments Proposed



HAVE A SHOE . . . "Guess we won't need these here," says Arry Willemssen, of The Hague, Holland, to Gloria Montesinos, of Madrid, Spain. Shoes are left out for Saint Nicholas and the Three Wise Men, respectively, in their native countries, similar to the American custom of leaving stockings hanging up. The Dutch get their gifts on Dec. 5, while the Spanish wait until Jan. 6.

Yule Customs Vary but The Thought's the Same

By TOM RISCHE
In America, Santa Claus is a jolly man in a red suit who drives a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer and alights down chimneys on Dec. 25 to bring gifts to the good boys and girls.

In Holland, it's Saint Nicholas, but he is dressed in a white suit and rides a white horse which is led by a servant who does the dirty work in the chimneys on Dec. 5.

And in Spain, it's the Three Wise Men who ride their camels throughout the land to slip gifts through the window on Jan. 6.

These are some of the differences in the observance of Christmas throughout the world as explained by two of Torrance's foreign students—Arry Willemssen, of The Hague, Holland, and Gloria Montesinos, of Madrid, Spain.

Christmas Alike, Different
Arry, a student at North High School living with Mr. and Mrs. Francis Stoeckle, of 3412 W. 175th St., and Gloria, a Torrance High coed who is living with Mrs. and Mrs. Frank Lane, of 1531 El Prado, are spending their first Christmas in the United States. They find many similarities and many differences in the observations here.

Shopping and preparations for the Yule season here are very similar to observance in their own lands, both report.

In both countries, however, when gifts are distributed, they carry only the name of the person to receive them, not of the giver.

In both lands, the person who gets a gift has to guess who gave it to him.

Packages Not Wrapped
In Spain, the packages generally are not wrapped but are placed by the window, around the shoes which every member of the family leaves for the Three Wise Men to fill. The youngsters all believe that their gifts are brought from the Holy Land by the Three Wise Men.

The Dutch find their gifts in a basket by the fireplace where they supposedly were left by "Black Peter," Saint Nick's servant who brought them down the chimney. Gifts are wrapped, but tagged only with the recipient's name. The family then tries to guess who gave them presents.

Gift giving in Holland takes place on Dec. 5, the birthday of St. Nicholas, patron saint of Christmas. On the other hand, the Spanish do not open their presents until Jan. 6, when, they believe, the Three Wise Men arrived in the Holy Land after hearing of the birth of Jesus.

Dec. 25 Is Holiday
Since presents are given in both countries on other days, Dec. 25 in both countries is reserved almost exclusively as

a religious holiday. Gloria usually attends the midnight mass at her church, while Arry goes to the Christmas Day services at his church.

It is a day when the family gets together for Christmas dinner, but is not as much a time for reunions.
In Holland, every family puts up a Christmas tree, decorated much as those in this country. They stick pretty much to the green variety, however, avoiding the pink, blue, and multi-color types which have become popular here.

Nativity Scene Used
Every family in Spain puts up a Nativity scene instead of the Christmas tree. Poorer families have only a small scene, similar to many in American homes. The richer families may have a scene with many figures, nearly large enough to fill a room. Each day, as Jan. 6 nears, the figures of the Three Wise Men are moved closer to the Nativity scene.

Nether Spaniards nor Dutchmen send as many Christmas cards as do Americans. The Spanish send cards, similar to those in America, only to people whom they see but seldom. The Dutch Christmas cards are similar to postcards here, and not as many are sent.

Parades Held
As a part of their holiday festivities, the Spanish hold large parades with figures of

Council Pay Goes To Voters

Proposals for seven amendments to the city charter of Torrance may be put on the municipal ballot here next April, it was revealed before the City Council Tuesday night.

Two changes which may stir up the most discussion are proposals to consolidate the city and school elections and to pay Councilmen \$100 a month.

The seven proposals discussed by the Councilmen include:
1. Placing position of assistant city attorney on Civil Service status.
2. Paying Councilmen \$100 a month.
3. Setting up a finance department in the city and providing for a finance officer.
4. Redrawing claims provisions in the charter to require filing of claims for the alleged taking of property.
5. Provision in the charter as a basis for the city's public utility franchise agreements.
6. Increasing maximum public works expenditures allowable without going to bid from \$1000 to \$2000.
7. Consolidating city and school elections.

Other ballot proposals which might be sought must be filed by Jan. 26, 1956, to be included on the April ballot, it was announced at the meeting.

Most of the changes sought in the charter are technical, the Councilmen were told. City Manager George Stevens introduced the proposals to create a finance department, saying that Torrance had grown to such a size that an office now was needed in the city. Stevens also recommended that the maximum expenditures without bid be upped to \$2000, pointing out that the value of the dollar had decreased so since the original \$1000 ceiling was placed in the charter that it was no longer a realistic figure.

Deputy City Attorney Stanley Remelmeier recommended the claims and franchise changes in the charter, saying they would clear up technical deficiencies.
The matter of paying Councilmen went on as a result of a recommendation by the Chamber of Commerce board of directors, and the consolidation of school and city elections was proposed by Councilman Victor E. Benstead Jr. Both measures received unanimous backing of the Councilmen.

Six Arrested For Breakege Of Windows

Six Lomita and Torrance teenage boys were picked up by sheriff's deputies recently in connection with a series of broken windows in Lomita. Deputies saw the group of boys going down the street and one of them threw away a sling-shot.

Searching the youngsters, deputies found marbles, steel balls, and rocks in their possession.
The youths were picked up after broken windows were reported by Melvin N. Christen, of 25002 Cypress Ave., Margie L. Long, of 2067 W. 248th St., and Walter S. Parr, of 2376 W. 247th St. All the breakage occurred shortly before the boys were apprehended.



BACK AT HER POST . . . Maj. Rose Kirchner is back at her post in front of the Torrance Post Office for the 10th year, after missing last Christmas because of injuries received in an auto accident. Maj. Kirchner, who worked with the Salvation Army from 1902 until her retirement in 1945, has become a familiar figure to local Christmas shoppers.

City Tops Chest Goal for Second Straight Year

Torrance rolled over its 1955 Community Chest goal Tuesday when the annual drive reached \$18,521 in donations, topping the established quota by \$11.

The city thus reached 100.06 per cent of its goal, chairman Phil Lisman said. He expects the final figure to be even higher, as many volunteers still have to turn in donations.

Torrance became the third Harbor area to surpass its Chest quota. Earlier Palos Verdes Estates and Rolling Hills had topped their quotas.

It was the second straight year local residents and firms had boosted the city past its mark.

Harbor Area Chairman James Visceglia said last week that only \$7000 were needed to put the entire area over the top.

He reported that \$77,571 had been collected, or 91.62 per cent of the goal of \$84,764.
City totals in the Harbor precinct in addition to Torrance are as follows: Gardena, \$12,484 or 90.77 per cent of quota; Harbor City-Lomita \$2322 or 89.89 per cent; Palos Verdes, \$7925 or 102.84 per cent; Rolling Hills, \$5512 or 124.93 per cent; San Pedro, \$17,369 or 71.22 per cent; Wilmington, \$12,648 or 89.99 per cent.

Volunteers are asked to turn in collections as soon as possible, Visceglia said. Persons not contacted for donations may mail contributions to the Chest Center, 1427 S. Pacific Ave., San Pedro. Receipts will be sent by return mail.

2 Homes, Auto Hit by Snipers

An area-wide manhunt for a carload of persons thought to be juveniles was continued today under the direction of Torrance police and Sheriff's deputies after two persons were wounded and several others were periled during a wild foray by snipers in the area last Tuesday.

Wounded while trimming a tree at the home of friends at 916 Beech Ave. was Joseph Paul Natter, 18, a Narbonne High School senior of 23028 Meyler St.

Nearly hit a bout the same time was Roy Kulp, a laundry route salesman of 918 Anapola, about three blocks from the Beech Ave. address.

Natter told police that he was decorating a Christmas tree near the window with Mary Skipper, also 18, at the Skipper residence on Beech Ave., when he heard the sound of the gun and began bleeding at the wrist.

Thought Bulb Exploded
"We thought a bulb had exploded," Natter told police. "I went into the kitchen to wash

the blood off my wrist when I found a hole," Natter learned then that he had been shot.

H. D. Skipper, at whose home the shooting took place, later found a .22 calibre slug on the floor of the house. It had apparently been fired from an auto on the street, police said.
At the Kulp home, a bullet ripped through the front window narrowly missing Kulp and his son, Thomas, 17.

Police called "Hit the floor, dad, someone's shooting at us," the younger Kulp shouted. Kulp called police immediately, saying the car might have been about 20 years old.

A few minutes earlier, Mrs. Mamie M. Burks, 44, of Marshfield, Mo., was wounded in the head as a .22 calibre bullet crashed through the window of an automobile in which she was riding near Santa Fe, and Del Amo in Dominguez. Deputies said Mrs. Burks, her husband, Winfred, and their son-in-law, Ned Day, were riding on Santa Fe Ave. when the shot crashed through the car window. Mrs. Burks said the shot came from a hot rod loaded with juveniles which sped by the Day auto.

No clues to the identity of the assailants in the three shooting incidents have been reported.

Rites Tomorrow For Prominent Local Realtor

Services will be held tomorrow for Leslie Alter, 75, prominent Torrance realtor, who died Tuesday morning in Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital. Rites will be at Halverson-Leavell Chapel at 1 p. m. with the Rev. H. Milton Sippel officiating.

A Torrance resident since 1936, he was associated with his son, Gerald, in the Alter Realty and Insurance Co., but served only in an advisory capacity since his retirement two years ago. A member of the Torrance-Lomita Realty Board, he and his son were in the real estate business here before incorporating the present business in 1944.
Gerald Alter is now president and general manager of the firm; his wife, Margaret, is secretary; and another son, Cecil, is vice president.

Active In Indiana

Mr. Alter lived at 1804 Marina Ave. He was born Nov. 22, 1880, on Riverdale Farm in Jasper County, Ind. There, he was business manager of the first community grain threshing pool and organized and headed the Jasper County Livestock Shipping Assn. He later headed the Union Stockyards at Rensselaer, Ind., and as a civil engineer, represented the county in supervision and acceptance of public drainage and construction projects.

He was a member of the Rosebud, Ind., Methodist Protestant Church, leading the Sunday School and conducting community singing. He also was a member of the Modern Woodmen of America and of Lodge 125, Free and Accepted Masons, of Rensselaer, Ind.

Funerals Named
Members of the Torrance Masonic Lodge will act as pallbearers, with burial in Roosevelt Memorial Park.

He is survived by his widow, Lettie; two sons, Cecil and Gerald; a daughter, Mrs. Doris Bristow, all of Torrance; a brother, J. Cecil Alter, of Lomita; two sisters, Iva Alter Pullin, of Rensselaer, Ind., and Fern McAulry, of Oakmont, Pa.; and four grandchildren, Janalee Joyce Bristow and Barbara June, Patsy Jo, and John Edward Alter.

Grapes Sour Anyway, Says Beach City

Reynard, the foxy star of many of Aesop's Fables, moved over Monday night to make room for the Redondo Beach City Council.

The wily fox is remembered for announcing that "those grapes are probably sour anyway," as he stalks away from a vineyard after long and unsuccessful attempts to get the little purple fruits.

Taking the same attitude, the Redondo Council Monday night announced that it didn't want the "Victor tract" because of street and drainage problems. Two weeks ago, Victor residents rebuffed Redondo's efforts to annex the area by presenting petitions overwhelmingly opposing such an annexation.

Torrance has announced its intention of circulating petitions in the area to hold an election on annexation of the area to this city. Observers are doubtful about the outcome of the election, which would determine whether the area would remain unincorporated territory or come into the city of Torrance.

Men Report Vandals Tampering With Mail

Somebody knocked his mailbox over for the third time in a week, a Lomita man told sheriff's deputies Monday, while another man reported someone has been tampering with his mail.

Arthur Mourer, of 25250 Cypress Ave., said somebody keeps pushing his mailbox over. On the other hand, Walter T. Goyner, of 2331 Evans Ct., said that he had received no mail for several days and later found it scattered near his home.



LESLIE ALTER
... Realtor Dies

News Index

Christmas is in the air this week and the columns of today's HERALD are filled with Yuletide news.	
Services planned in local churches are described on page 14, while the social plans of local residents can be found on page 9.	
Their ideas of what Christmas means are explained by Rev. Paul Wenske and Mrs. Boone Kirks on page 14, Reid Bundy on page 9, and Tom Rische on page 5.	
Getting ready to observe her 98th Christmas is Mrs. Martha Weber, believed to be the oldest person in Torrance. She reminisces in a story on page 2.	
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A Note to Santa--Only 3 Shopping Days 'Til Christmas